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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
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IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Reports provided by specialized agencies of the United Nations on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Introductory note

1. On behalf of the Committee, the Secretariat invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), on 31 May 1995, to submit to the Committee by 1 September 1995 a report on information provided by States to FAO on the implementation of article 14 and related articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which would supplement the information contained in the reports of those States parties to the Convention that will be considered at the fifteenth session. These are the latest reports of Belgium, Cuba, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Hungary, Iceland, Paraguay and Ukraine.

2. Other information sought by the Committee refers to the activities, programmes and policy decisions undertaken by FAO to promote the implementation of article 14 and related articles of the Convention.

3. The report annexed hereto has been submitted in compliance with the Committee's request.

ANNEX

Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

I. BACKGROUND

1. In its twenty-seventh session in 1993, the Conference requested that a fourth progress report be prepared for its twenty-eighth session in 1995; it also called for revision of the Plan of Action (C 93/I/REP/3), as per the first progress report's provision for periodic review of priority implementation areas in order to assure their continued relevance. Consequently, the report and revised Plan of Action are presented for review and approval.

2. The activities described in the present report demonstrate that FAO continues to make significant progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action for Women in Development, both in its substantive and administrative priority areas.

II. PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN OF ACTION

3. In its substantive programme actions, FAO continued to develop innovative interventions oriented towards increasing rural women's access to and control of productive resources, especially through improved extension and training. Many organization activities highlighted the crucial roles played by rural women in such areas as food security, household nutrition and family well-being, demographics, and ecologically sustainable development. In many countries, the institutional capabilities to recognize the differential needs and constraints of rural women as opposed to men has been strengthened, and the ability of these institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, to deliver services that reflect these differential needs and constraints has been enhanced. By learning from these experiences, FAO will be better prepared to replicate successes in other countries and to develop even better interventions in the future. Section III of the present report provides examples of 1994-1995 achievements in the substantive areas of gender-sensitive project development and monitoring, gender-analysis training, and gender-responsive policy advice to member countries.

4. FAO also strove to achieve progress in the administrative priority areas, especially in regard to the very special effort to revise the plan of action and to the preparatory and follow-up activities to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Section IV of the present report provides information on activities undertaken during the biennium to mainstream women in development/gender issues both within the organization and in member States. Draft decisions for the Conference are presented in section V.

III. SUBSTANTIVE ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

A. Project development and monitoring

5. Project development and monitoring activities and related regular programme support undertaken in 1994-1995 to implement the Plan are wide-ranging. However, owing to space limitations this section presents only a representative sampling from three FAO action areas: extension and technical training; environment, natural resource management and sustainable development; and nutrition and food security.

1. Extension and technical training

Mainstreaming women in training

6. In Nepal, to counter the mobility problems of rural women, the Animal Production and Health Division created a mobile training unit in Nepal that travelled directly to villages and, as a consequence, women came to constitute 45 per cent of all trainees. Similarly, in Latin America, the Division held training courses as one-day events so as better to accommodate women's schedules; women now constitute 60 per cent of all trainees and 55 per cent of attendees at project-related meetings. This training also includes information on how legally to register community groups, which 21 women's groups and associations have now done. In the Gambia, the Division sought to improve animal management and marketing skills of 10,000 women farmers through the construction of demonstration sites in selected villages.

7. In a number of vegetable marketing projects in Lesotho and Nepal, the Agricultural Services Division is assisting extension services to provide a package of rural services for women, including training in production planning, improved post-harvest techniques and producer-market linkages. The fertilizer projects of the Land and Water Development Division include farmers' field days focusing on the roles and responsibilities of women in plant nutrition, vegetable production, plant nutrient management and group vegetable gardening.

Reorienting agricultural and home economics curricula

8. FAO is assisting member nations to train present and future agricultural extensionists and home economists in the importance of technical and managerial training for rural women to better understand how to deliver appropriate services to women.

9. To serve better rural families, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development assisted the Governments of Sri Lanka, Nepal, Hungary, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Tunisia and Uganda to reorient their agricultural extension training and delivery systems to make them more participatory, and client and gender-responsive. Close links established with regional groups such as the Home Economics Association for Africa and the Asian Regional Association for Home Economics helped to evaluate home economics training and to reorient curricula so as to meet rural families' needs.

10. In 1994, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development produced a guide for member States to reorient curricula entitled Rural households and sustainability: Integrating environment and gender concerns into home economics curricula, and in 1995 released new versions of two major publications - the Extension reference manual and the Extension training guide, drawing on experiences of the Division in a five-nation (Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe) project to improve extension work with women. A FAO manual on Improving Agricultural Extension Work with Rural Women is being adapted by the Subregional Office for Southern/East Africa with the University of Ghana (Faculty of Agriculture and the Department of Home Science) to specific training needs in Ghana. Assistance is being provided by the Division to projects designed to reach rural women in remote areas including the ongoing project in Mali funded by the Belgian Government, "Assistance aux groupements des femmes de la zone encadrée de Kayes Nord" to increase and diversify food production and to increase nutritional status, introduce income-generating activities, to improve access to water and consequently to extend the period of cultivation and, finally, to assist farmers in establishing local markets.

11. FAO began to elaborate a series of case-studies in Africa and Asia on female enrolment trends in agricultural colleges and universities in developing countries. This complements the preparation of directories of such institutions that present the numbers of male and female students and faculty members. The directories for Africa and Central and Eastern Europe were printed in 1995. During the biennium, the Division held eight regional round tables on agricultural education, highlighting the need to increase female enrolment in agricultural programmes. Summary reports of each were published in all official languages of the United Nations in 1994.

12. The Agricultural Services Division revised its training manual on Farming systems research and extension to make it more gender-responsive. In 1994, FAO published a case-study entitled "Extension 'woman to woman' - Training peasant women liaisons to reach peasant women". It summarizes lessons learned from FAO field projects in Honduras between 1986 and 1992 in providing training and extension services for and through rural women and extension staff. Based on experiences gained in various African countries, the Agricultural Services Division and the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development also published "Managing income-generating rural activities: Village group training" for use by trainers and extensionists.

2. Sustainable development, natural resource management and environment

13. A large number of FAO activities aim at enhancing women's roles in sustainable development. A more specific body of efforts centres on researching and raising awareness about the links among environment, poverty, population and rural women.

Women, natural resource management and environment

14. A draft study, entitled "The role of indigenous women in generic resources management in Guatemala", was undertaken in areas where varieties of maize have been domesticated and adapted by small-scale farmers. A second study, entitled "Study on the access of indigenous populations in Bolivia and Mexico to ecological and productive resources", has been planned to look at the gender-differentiated access to forests and crop land, as well as community and family labour organization for the exploitation of these resources.

15. In response to the interest expressed by the Government of the Netherlands, a mission was undertaken to Zimbabwe to formulate a gender-sensitive project on "Development of indigenous technical knowledge and practices for natural resources management and household security in communal areas". The project aims to produce an institutional mechanism and research methodology for the development and eventual incorporation of indigenous technologies and practices into the policies, programmes and action plans of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Water Resources Development.

16. In 1994-1995, the Forestry Policy and Planning Division published a document entitled "Guidelines: Integrating gender considerations into FAO forestry projects" in all FAO languages. Moreover, gender is given close attention in all publications and audio-visuals of the Division. Examples include the following, released in 1994-1995: "Common forest resource management" (an annotated bibliography of sources on Africa, Asia and Latin America); "Introducing community forestry" (an annotated list of topics and readings); a field manual on "Tree and land tenure: Rapid appraisal tools"; and a video entitled What is a tree? The Forest Resources Division, in 1994, published a summary technical text on "The challenge of sustainable forest management: what future for the world's forests?" The book highlights forest product based income generating opportunities for women as well as men. A second volume with individual papers on this subject is forthcoming.

17. In Myanmar, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development is assisting four projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of the Human Development Initiative, all with a natural resource management and gender focus: on the sustainable development of mangrove areas, community fuelwood lots, low-input agriculture, and environmental rehabilitation of the country's dry zone.

Women, population and environment

18. A roundtable of experts on women, population and environment in south-east Asia was held at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 2-6 May 1994, out of which came a report entitled "Environment, women and population: Technical issues and policy guidelines for agricultural and rural development in South-East Asia". A population education manual for outreach workers was developed and published in 1994 by the Institute for Population and Development, Manila, under FAO's technical guidance. The manual provides a wide range of methods for integrating gender-sensitive population messages in ongoing non-formal education and training programmes in rural areas.

19. Also, as part of the current FAO/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) arrangements for technical support services, cooperation with UNFPA country support teams included an independent evaluation mission to Mozambique for an International Labour Organization (ILO)/UNFPA project entitled "Strengthening of the organization of Mozambican women". The Division on Women and People's Participation in Development also liaised with UNFPA country support teams for East Africa and with UNFPA country support teams for Arab States. On both occasions, recent FAO and UNFPA achievements in the area of women, population and development were shared and grounds were set for future cooperation. The Human Resources, Institutions and Agrarian Reform Division and the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development continued to take part in the technical backstopping of a UNFPA project in China on mother and child health care and family planning.

20. Technical assistance was provided to the FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo, in conceptualizing a policy-issues paper on women, population and environment in the Near East, to be developed in 1995. As part of the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development's efforts to promote cooperation with non-governmental organizations, a seminar on FAO concepts and methodologies in identifying policy issues in the area of women, population and environment was offered at the Nucleo de Estudos da Mulher e Relaçoes Sociais de Genero of the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

3. Food security and nutrition

21. FAO works to support women's contributions to food security and nutrition and to enhance women's roles as primary nutrition managers at the household level, as income providers and as food producers, and to increase their access to all the necessary resources. FAO also gives special attention to women's own nutritional needs, which are especially at risk for single mothers and all pregnant or lactating women.

Food security

22. The Food Security Assistance Scheme of FAO's Commodities and Trade Division takes gender issues into account in its initial assessment and identification of the root causes of, and possible solutions to, food insecurity at household, community and national levels. During 1994-1995, FAO provided such analyses to six countries in Africa, two in Asia and 12 in Latin America. Similar gender-responsive assistance is given at regional level to the Customs Union of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community for Central African States, the Latin American Integration Association, and the Preferential Trade Area of Eastern and Southern African States. In implementing all these efforts, the Division has also emphasized hiring women to work as consultants and national counterparts.

Nutrition

23. During 1994-1995, as a follow-up to the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition, FAO's Food Policy and Nutrition Division provided technical assistance to a number of countries for assessing national food security and

nutritional status and for drawing up national plans of action for nutrition. With the World Health Organization (WHO), the Division held expert consultations on human nutrition requirements with specific emphasis on disaggregating requirements by sex, childbearing and lactation status, and other gender-relevant variables. The Division also contributed to gender-specific studies of food toxicoses, and is producing guidelines for involving women in the participatory formulation of nutrition projects.

Traditional foodstuffs in household food security

24. The Division also promotes household food security in another way: through greater attention to wild or domestic underutilized traditional foodstuffs, whose identification, use and preservation are nearly always the purview of rural women. These foodstuffs are particularly important in food-deficient countries for reducing vitamin and mineral deficiencies by diversifying diets and for improving the economic status of poor households, especially women. Traditional foods are also often multipurpose, providing for such needs as medicines and dyes. In the aggregate they exploit the full range of localized agro-ecological niches and are almost always more tolerant of or resistant to drought, pests or disease than introduced crops. Increased recognition of such unique biological resources also pays bonuses in the form of added incentives to maintain biodiversity, in which women play a key role.

25. A Food Policy and Nutrition Division project in the Niger, for example, emphasizes the consumption of indigenous foods rich in vitamin A to combat blindness and other deficiency diseases. Women organize in groups to learn new solar drying techniques and to receive training in a number of supporting areas, including nutrition, literacy and access to and management of credit. The Food Policy and Nutrition Division also works with vendors of traditional street foods throughout Africa, where 80 per cent of such vendors are women.

B. Gender-analysis training

26. If women are to benefit significantly from and participate in development, specialists and policy makers must be sensitized to gender issues, and all member nations' and the United Nations system's capacity to design and execute gender-responsive projects, programmes and policies expanded. This involves training at various levels.

1. The socio-economic and gender analysis training programme

27. As reported in the last progress report, FAO, along with UNDP and the World Bank, initiated the socio-economic and gender analysis programme. The programme is continuing as a collaborative effort of FAO, ILO, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of the Netherlands.

28. The basic intent of the programme is to promote a new paradigm for people-centred development programming. A conceptual framework incorporating socio-economic and gender analysis at the macro (inter-household) and micro (intra-household) level with people's participation and conflict resolution has been developed and is being operationalized through a socio-economic and gender analysis field manual accompanied by an open-ended series of technical supplements, which will be concise, sector and subsector specific guides to utilizing the socio-economic and gender analysis paradigm. These supplements will be extensively cross-referenced with the field manual so that additional information can easily be retrieved by the intended target users, including sector specialists and planners who identify and design development programmes and projects.

29. At this time, major sections of the field manual have been prepared in first drafts, and training modules are being developed by ILO, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development expects to initiate testing of these modules in early 1996.

2. Training materials for gender analysis

30. In addition to the socio-economic and gender analysis activities, FAO has been involved in developing other gender analysis training materials. For example, the Forestry Policy and Planning Division is supporting the development of a gender-training package for Central America by the regional non-governmental organization Mujer y Desarrollo. Also, in coordination with FAO projects in South America, the Division is developing a Spanish-language guide for field workers on women and forestry, in preparation for 1996-1997 training of such workers.

31. In 1994, the Fishery Industries Division produced a training and information video on Gender in Rural Fisheries that focuses on men's and women's roles, time use, access to training and fishing priorities and needs. Further, it outlines the development of a gender-sensitive fishing project and links gender to environmental and broader political and socio-economic issues.

3. Gender-responsive information

32. An important aspect of on-the-job training for technical specialists is to inform them about, or raise their awareness of, significant gender issues through such means as reference documentation, workshops and seminars. To this end, in a 1994 issue of FAO's World Animal Review devoted to dairy development, three articles focused exclusively on gender issues in livestock development. In 1995, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development disseminated a study on the role of women in Indian dairy cooperatives to raise awareness of gender issues in this area. The Division also contracted the World Women's Veterinary Association to prepare a case-study on local knowledge in animal health and production systems - gender perspectives, in Bolivia, while the Animal Production and Health Division conducted similar studies in Kenya with the Kenya Veterinary Association and in the United Republic of Tanzania with Sokoine University. The Animal Production and Health Division also

included gender in a FAO-sponsored dairy development seminar held at Harare in 1994.

33. In 1994, the FAO Panel of Experts on Agricultural Engineering of the Agricultural Services Division devoted one full day of its three-day session to gender issues in technology development and transfer. To increase women's participation in rural organizations, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development financed a workshop on the role of women in farmer self-help organizations in West Africa and with the International Cooperative Alliance's West Africa Regional Office, a study on the role of women in rice production/marketing cooperatives in Bolivia, and a study on the role of women in rural trade unions in Latin America.

C. Gender-responsive policy support and advice to member countries

34. Gender-responsive policy support and advice cover a wide range of activities including improving the database for policy decisions, directly influencing policy formulation, and strengthening women in development machineries.

1. Improving statistics

35. Based on the efforts of the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development and the Statistics Division in 1991-1992, and on the results of the Statistics Division, the Subregional Office for Southern/East Africa and the Regional Office for the Near East case-studies completed in 1993 on disaggregating agricultural census data by gender in seven Near Eastern countries, the Statistics Division is preparing a manual to be released during the next biennium entitled "Programme for the World Census of Agriculture 2000". The manual's supplemental guidelines are intended to improve gender disaggregated data on human resources through agricultural censuses. At the Asia and Pacific Commission for Agricultural Statistics' Regional Meeting at Manila in 1994, the Statistics Division staff shared the information they have gained through presentation of a paper on statistics on women obtained through national agricultural censuses and surveys.

36. The Statistics Division also shared its methodological findings on gender and time use at the fifteenth reunion of the International Association for Time Use Research, as well as at the Time Use Project Meeting of INSTRAW.

37. At the regional level, with the assistance of the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development, the Regional Office for Europe initiated a two-year project to furnish gender-responsive agricultural databases and country profiles for policy and programme formulators in the Commonwealth of Independent States countries. The Subregional Office for Southern/East Africa has also embarked on a programme to compile statistical databases on women's work and working conditions in agriculture for all African countries, for use by national policy makers and planners. The Subregional Office for Southern/East Africa is also collaborating with the national statistical departments of Togo and Benin to improve existing agricultural statistical data collection systems

in order to obtain more gender-specific information for planning purposes. Togo has already begun to modify its regular agricultural survey along these lines.

38. In the Near East, FAO developed a project to improve the collection and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data in agriculture and rural development through agricultural censuses and surveys. Under the project, national case-studies on improving gender-disaggregated data were prepared for several countries in the Near East (Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Turkey). These reports were discussed at a workshop held at Cairo from 26 to 28 July 1994. Based on the results of the workshop, guidelines for the production and dissemination of data disaggregated by gender were produced for similar undertakings in other countries in the Near East and in other regions of the world.

39. Other technical units are working to incorporate or improve gender-disaggregated statistics. For example, the Policy Analysis Division is completing its work on K2, a computerized system that will permit assessment of the impacts of a wide range of agricultural policies on key variables, including gender-disaggregated information on the labour force, income distribution, nutrition and population. FAO's Fisheries Department redesigned its questionnaire for national statistical offices to report employment in fishing in such a way as to include gender ratios in all tasks within this sector. At the same time, the Fisheries Department established a computerized system to facilitate the dissemination of such data.

2. Influencing policy formulation

40. To assist Near Eastern countries undergoing structural adjustment to strike a balance between economic growth and the needs of rural women, the Regional Office for the Near East has established regional research task forces to provide information on such issues as the growth of women-headed households and the impact of male migration on women's roles and workload. As a means of promoting policy dialogue and advice on women in development gender topics, the Regional Office for the Near East created "Widialogue" in 1994 as a quarterly newsletter that has attracted a wide readership including policy makers. Similarly, the FAO-sponsored Latin American and Caribbean network, which since its initiation in 1993 has grown to 24 member nations, pursues such dialogue in its annual bulletin, Redes.

41. FAO supported China's Research Centre for Rural Economy, of the Ministry of Agriculture, to conduct a study in six provinces examining gender factors in household agriculture and food production activities. Two studies were undertaken through a technical support services-1 project in China; the Institute of Sociology focused on the effects on rural women of rural-to-urban migration under market-oriented reforms while the China Population Information Research Centre examined demographic variations and regional differences with a gender perspective. Findings were reported in a national symposium organized by the Government of China, UNDP and FAO in 1995.

42. The Information Division advised the Governments of the Central African Republic, the Comoros, the Congo and Guinea-Bissau on national development

communication policies with particular reference to the problems of rural women. The Division has also undertaken gender-disaggregated qualitative research and baseline surveys to identify how communication strategies and policies can help empower women.

43. During 1994-1995, the Plant Production and Protection Division held workshops in South-East Asia and East Africa for government policy makers and scientists on policies improving household horticulture and food security, with an emphasis on women's roles.

44. The Human Resources, Institutions and Agrarian Reform Division and the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development supported the Government of Viet Nam to develop policies on women in agriculture and rural development. Eight national institutions developed technical papers and held a national symposium at Hanoi in December 1994. Draft policy guidelines are currently being drafted by the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Committee on the Advancement of Women in Viet Nam. Also in 1994, FAO published a paper entitled "Politique et stratégie de développement en faveur des femmes rurales", an analysis of collaboration between FAO and member nations of Africa, to facilitate their policy work for integrating rural women into agricultural development.

3. Strengthening women in development machinery

45. During 1994-1995, a majority of the requests for policy assistance from the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development centred on the creation or reinforcement of national-level women in development machinery by: training staff in management, organization and gender issues; establishing coordinating mechanisms between women in development units and other government entities and non-governmental organizations; and preparing national strategies and plans of action. Details of FAO's activities in these areas are included in the later discussion of actions relating to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

IV. INNOVATIVE MAINSTREAMING ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

46. This section focuses on several activities undertaken by FAO during the biennium to encourage the mainstreaming of women in development gender issues into the work of the organization and of the member nations. It also discusses affirmative action issues within FAO.

A. The revision of the Plan of Action

47. At the request of the twenty-seventh Conference, FAO reviewed the continued viability of the FAO Plan of Action for Integration of Women in Development (1989-1995). Despite the impact of the existing Plan, highlighted in this and the three preceding progress reports, this review found both operational and substantive needs for revisions to the Plan. Most importantly, the review recommended that the scope of the Plan and its priorities be clarified and

limited in order to concentrate scarce resources on obtainable goals, that the priorities more accurately reflect FAO's substantive areas of work and realistically achievable goals, and that verifiable indicators be developed to facilitate monitoring of progress and reporting. The revision was also found to be timely since FAO's leadership, organizational structure, policies and priorities have been changing and evolving over the last two years.

48. The revised Plan of Action for Women in Development (1996-2001) eliminates the earlier Plan's focus on eight substantive priority areas, with numerous prescribed activities that were difficult to monitor and found to be too encompassing to implement effectively. In their place, the revised Plan (C 95/14, Supplement 1) emphasizes three strategic objectives for promoting gender equity in achieving sustainable development in FAO's substantive areas of work, and highlights four key areas of interrelated actions to achieve these three objectives. The result is a more systematic and programmatic approach that will allow FAO to concentrate human and financial resources on these more achievable and measurable objectives. The revised Plan also eliminates the earlier focus on five administrative priorities in favour of establishing more effective mechanisms for providing advice on implementing the Plan of Action, for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Plan, and for achieving equal employment opportunity targets.

49. The methodology for revising the Plan of Action was developed to make the revision as participatory as possible. First, division directors and senior management were convoked to discuss the proposed revision and it was agreed that each technical division, plus the Division of Personnel, would develop a formal, internal women in development divisional programme of action for the medium term (1996-2001). Second, the Integration of Women in Development Service, the coordinating unit, facilitated half-day consultations with staff of 65 services from 25 divisions that are technically responsible for the Plan's implementation. Third, to promote the advancement of rural women in their own areas of competence, these technical divisions and services developed draft women in development programmes of action with realistic objectives, activities, outputs and monitoring indicators. Fourth, these draft programmes were prepared and submitted to the Integration of Women in Development Service and the Evaluation Service for review prior to finalization. Finally, the Division on Women and People's Participation in Development consolidated these divisional programmes and incorporated them into the FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development, 1996-2001. This Plan guides the implementation of FAO's mandate related to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and to the Platform for Action that stemmed from the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.

B. The Fourth World Conference on Women

50. FAO undertook extensive activities to promote rural women in the preparation of and follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. In 1994, through the FAO assistance in support of rural women in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women - Phase I programme, FAO provided technical and financial support to a total of 16 countries in their preparations for Beijing: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Congo, Eastern Caribbean, Egypt, El Salvador,

Honduras, Lebanon, Namibia, Peru, Philippines, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Additional missions were sent to Nepal, the Niger and Rwanda to facilitate country-level preparations for the Conference.

51. Under Phase I, assistance was provided to ministries of agriculture, and/or the women's machinery in each country, to carry out an in-depth analysis of available information on rural women, to prepare a sectoral report on rural women to be included in each country's national report for the Beijing Conference, and to hold a workshop to discuss critical issues affecting rural women that were addressed in the sectoral report. These reports are also intended for use by the ministry of agriculture and the national women's machinery as a working document for promoting the advancement of rural women.

52. Phase II activities under this programme are to strengthen national capacity to implement the Platform for Action, which was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. At present, the Government of Norway is supporting Phase II activities in Namibia, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania, and FAO continues to seek donor support for such activities in the remaining countries that participated in Phase I of the Programme.

53. Technical assistance was also provided at the regional level for the development of region programmes of action that were presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and FAO participated in all the regional preparatory conferences organized by the economic commissions.

54. In Africa, a regional synthesis report was prepared based on the sectoral reports on women in agriculture and rural development of nine African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe). For Asia and the Pacific, FAO also prepared socio-economic studies on women in agriculture and rural development in China and Viet Nam, as well as a paper on women and agro-based small enterprises with a focus on credit and training in Asia, for distribution at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

55. In Europe, FAO initiated a project to compile data and information and prepare country profiles on women's role in agriculture and rural development in Central and Eastern Europe. Based on the results of the profiles, a regional synthesis report was prepared and presented at Beijing. A total of 10 countries were involved in this effort: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

56. In Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO supported the preparation of sectoral reports on rural women in Bolivia, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. A document on rural women of Latin America and the Caribbean, prepared with FAO support, was included in the regional report presented at Beijing. FAO also published a case-study on women in the Peruvian Amazon, which analyses the situation and roles of women in the social and economic context of the Peruvian Amazon.

57. Under the Regional Programme of Action for Women in Agriculture in the Near East, support for the preparation of sectoral reports on women in agriculture and rural development was provided to 17 countries: Cyprus, Egypt, Iran

(Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The synthesis of these reports served as a regional input to the Beijing Conference, and the recommendations were translated into a Plan of Action for Women in Agriculture in the Near East to cover the decade 1996-2005. In addition, FAO prepared a paper on women in resource-management and the environment - a Near East perspective, which was distributed at Beijing.

58. At the international level, FAO undertook activities to ensure that important issues such as food security, migration, environmental degradation and other concerns, which have a strong impact on rural women and communities, were discussed at Beijing. The organization prepared specialized information materials, including country fact sheets, to relay simple and concise messages on rural women's roles in sustainable agriculture and food security. FAO also prepared an updated bibliography on the role of women in agriculture and rural development and produced an activities report detailing its support to rural women and the ongoing women in development programme. Both documents were distributed at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

59. FAO also coordinated its activities with a number of joint United Nations efforts and programmes by participating in inter-agency meetings, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC)/women in development group meetings, and many expert meetings and informal consultations. FAO prepared the section on women's access to land and natural resources for the 1994 update of the World Survey on Women and contributed to the section on women's access to credit and financial institutions. In addition, FAO participated in the global information campaign regarding the Conference by distributing and, where necessary, supplementing the materials provided by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat.

60. FAO provided support to the International Federation of Agricultural Producers for the preparation of a document entitled "From the Women Farmers' Perspective: A Synthesis of the Results of the Regional Preparatory Meetings for the Fourth World Conference on Women". The document was presented at a technical consultation for women farmers in March 1995, during the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the last preparatory conference for Beijing.

61. In addition, FAO developed an internal information campaign to inform its staff about the Conference and to encourage their contribution to preparatory activities. FAO also provided regular updates and information notes to member nations, as well as within FAO, on Conference preparations and its own programme of activities in preparation for Beijing.

C. Affirmative action issues

62. Although progress has been made since the 1993 Conference, the United Nations target of 35 per cent female Professional staff by 1995 has not been reached. Identifying qualified female candidates for positions in FAO's specialized technical fields still proves difficult, notwithstanding member

nation encouragement of applications from qualified female nationals. For example, only about 22 per cent of all applications received for vacant posts filled in 1993 were from women, although they constituted 25 per cent of those selected. A still stronger push therefore needs to be made to encourage applications from qualified women. In spite of these constraints, some improvement has been made. The overall percentage of women Professionals serving at FAO headquarters has risen from 19.7 as reported in 1991 to 20.4 in 1994, in the regional offices and among FAO representatives from 9.3 to 10.3, and, in the field, from 4.1 to 8.0.

63. The number of women in more senior positions has increased during the last three bienniums. For example, at the P-4 level the number of women at headquarters has progressed since 1989 from 34 to 67, representing 19.4 per cent of the total staff in this grade, and at the P-5 level the figure has increased over the same time period from 14 to 22, representing 7.9 per cent of the total. There are at present seven women in the Director category, representing about 5 per cent of the total. While at these higher grade levels the percentage of women needs to be increased, at the lower Professional grades the number of women is more equitable. At the end of 1994, women constituted 46.2 per cent of the staff at P-3 and 46 per cent at the P-2 level.

64. The revised Plan of Action brings a renewed focus on the issue of affirmative action for women as both Professional officers and as consultants. The indicated activities include updating and expanding consultancy rosters, and examining personnel policies to ensure that no unintentional obstacles exist that would stand in the way of achieving goals that have been established in this important area.

V. DRAFT DECISIONS

65. Based on the foregoing discussions, FAO recommends the following decisions for the Conference:

(a) In view of the progress reported in the priority areas of the Plan of Action since its adoption by the Conference in 1989, it is recommended that the Conference endorse this fourth progress report on the implementation of the Plan of Action;

(b) Considering the rather unique nature of the programmes of action of the various technical divisions of FAO, it is recommended that the fifth progress report on the implementation of the Plan of Action be presented at the thirtieth conference in 1999, and that reporting concentrate on the progress made during the next two bienniums in meeting the objectives of the various programmes;

(c) Finally, it is recommended that the Conference adopt the revised FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development. While this Plan would be effective

for the years 1996 to 2001, FAO can adjust this document, as changing events and developments dictate, at the request of any succeeding Conference.